

EP 0590263 A2 (hereafter "*Kotani et al.*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 10 of the Official Action.

For at least the reasons noted below, this rejection should be withdrawn.

1. The date of invention of the present application based on a perfected priority date is prior to the date the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference is available as prior art

Applicants submit herewith a certified copy of the foreign priority document SE 9903176-7 filed in Sweden on September 7, 1999, with the purpose of perfecting the priority claim and overcoming the date of the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference. See MPEP §§201.13-15 and 706.02(b). The foreign priority document is in English. The foreign priority document antedates the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference. Thus, the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference is not available as prior art to the present application and rejections based upon the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference are improper.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections relying upon the *Bengtsson et al.* '121 reference, e.g., the rejections of claims 1-18 outlined at paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Official Action.

CONCLUSION

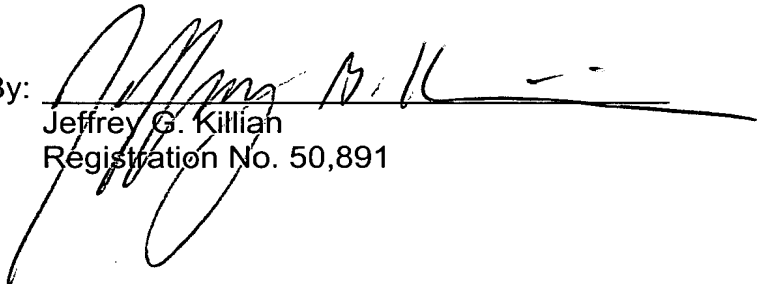
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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